

Education in the Midst of Pandemic: The Senior High School Academic Experience

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Abstract: *This study looked into the academic journey of SHS students of Surigao during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Its objective is to identify significant information and organize it into themes. The study used phenomenology design in the data analysis and interpretation. The following themes emerged from the participants' narratives: they had issues with their learning modality, knowledge, community, finances, technology, well-being, environment and health. Based on the findings, the COVID-19 pandemic caused a plethora of problems for senior high school students. They encountered difficulty with their learning, as well as financial, technical, mental and emotional well-being, and lifestyle issues that impacted them in many ways. The COVID-19 epidemic has an impact on students' well-being and academic aspects as they continue their academic journey through times of disruption. Thus, cooperation from parents, friends, schools, and the community is critical at SHS.*

Keywords: COVID-19 Pandemic, Academic Journey of SHS student, Surigao State College of Technology Del Carmen – Campus, Siargao Island

I. INTRODUCTION

According to PubMed Central (2022), the COVID-19 epidemic affected people from various sectors of life, including higher education. Since the World Health Organization designated COVID-19 a pandemic in March 2020, lockdowns, social isolation, working from home, and online education have become commonplace. Regular face-to-face classes were replaced with distance education. On the other side, the development alarmed both students and faculty.

According to World Bank (2021), due to the COVID-19 epidemic, school and university closures have impacted more than 1.6 billion young people around the world. The pandemic upheaval of society and the economy is intensifying a global schooling crisis that already exists. The impact on the human capital of this generation of learners is probably long-lasting. The Philippines' Department of Education has begun incorporating online and modular learning into its teaching methods. However, because the transition was not adequately planned, it caused major obstacles. Lack of infrastructure and resources, instructor inexperience with virtual teaching, student resources, and network connectivity concerns are among the challenges, PubMed Central (2022). The transition to online and modular education puts a greater strain on students' well-being, Malolos et al. (2021). According to Navarosa (2020), the main technological challenge in remote learning is the internet connection. Some students may be discouraged from continuing their studies due to poor internet speeds or lack of resources, CNN Philippines (2020). Developing habits like playing games, media, watching TV or sleeping in may lead to a sloppy performance for students and a rude revelations when they start working full-time, Best Colleges (2020). Virtual communication will never have the same impact as in-person conversation, but it is an excellent replacement for communication during the pandemic, Brown et al. (2020). A calm learning environment provides psychological support by providing a pleasant and comfortable setting for students to be more motivated to study, Cooper (2020).

The general intention of this study is to perceive the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the academic journey of senior high school students in Siargao Island, Philippines. Specifically at Surigao State College of Technology—Del Carmen Campus. Focusing on academic experience, technology, and well-being. This study of ours' differs from the others due to its focus on the SHS students at a certain school in a particular area.

The importance of this study is to investigate the problems and hardship that senior high school students experienced towards their academic journey during a pandemic. This study intends to: (1) Explore the personal experiences of SHS students during the COVID-19 pandemic. (2) Determine the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic toward the student's

well-being and academic aspects. (3) Determine the assistance required by SHS students to survive the difficulties encountered while pursuing their academic journey during the COVID-19 pandemic. (4) The positive and negative aspects of technology toward their academic performance. The extent to which learning environments are focused on learner, knowledge, technology, evaluation, health, and community. This appears particularly important given current facts about their academic life.

II. METHOD

This study used the phenomenology design on senior high school students' lived experiences toward their academic journey amid the COVID-19 Pandemic at Surigao State College of Technology—Del Carmen Campus. The narratives of SHS students will be captured and written through themes. The participants of this study are 6 eligible students who were randomly selected from three different strands. Ethical considerations will be used in the study; an informed consent form will be sent to the participants to express their willingness towards the interview. We also ensured that the data we gathered is not fabricated and is a misrepresentation of our study. The benefits of this study will give us a clear perspective on the different experiences of SHS students and how they cope with them.

Researchers will use participant observation and interviews in data gathering procedures. The interview questions will be checked for approval and to determine whether the questions are open-ended. To ensure that it captures the essence of their experiences as well as the study's objectives. It will be used for the participants during the interview period. This is to support on the information gathered from the questionnaires. A criterion sampling technique will also be used to ensure that the participants meet predefined criteria. The participant's experience with the phenomenon under investigation is the most important factor. The researchers will look for participants who have had a similar encounter, but differ in their traits and experiences.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

THEME 1: SHS students' personal experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic

During the pandemic, participants faced several obstacles and hurdles. They had problems with their preferred learning methods, as well as financial, technological, well-being, and lifestyle challenges. They expressed their dissatisfaction with the sudden transition from face-to-face to distance learning. Sometimes teachers' lectures are unclear and cannot answer students' questions immediately via messaging apps. As a result, the students begin self-study. They have also faced financial difficulties as a result of the pandemic's economic impact. This frightened parents and had an impact on the students' mental, physical, spiritual, financial, environmental and emotional well-being. Some people are unable to afford a home Wi-Fi package or even a mobile data load. However, even if some individuals can afford it, the internet or data is extremely slow. Radiation is often harmful, yet they must withstand it for their studies. Furthermore, their lifestyle has radically altered, resulting in little interaction; they spend most of their time at home studying and doing chores. Their mental well-being has suffered as a result of all of this stress and difficulty. However, staying back home has allowed them to reconnect with their families, which is one of the things they're thankful for in the midst of the pandemic.

THEME 2: Students' well-being and academic aspects amidst the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the participants' well-being and academic aspects. The pandemic altered their connections with themselves and their families. They had no notion that their personal family relationships would grow stronger and more progressive than they had been previously. Because they have limited time with their peers, they rely solely on social media to interact. They also acknowledged in the interview that they had changed in terms of motivation and mental well-being during the course of the pandemic. Their mental, emotional and physical well-being is severely impacted because, according to them, they are occasionally mentally unstable and struggle to be productive, which affects some of their academic performance. They suffered from anxiety and, in some cases, depression. Some students appear to be more focused on school tasks and learning due to being removed from other distractions by a clean environment. While others seem to be distracted due to the noisy environment they live in.

THEME 3: Assistance needed by the SHS students in surviving through their academic journey among COVID-19 pandemic

There are support structures in place to help individuals cope with the pandemic, such as family, peers, school, and the community. During the pandemic, participants said their family is the closest and most immediate person they have. They urged that their families provide comfort, direction, incentive, and whatever other kind of help they could. They also recognized the need to be able to provide adequate financial and other resources for learning. Some people believe that their peers are more important to them than their family, and that communication and moral support from their peers are essential in calming their thoughts. While, others seem to have less social contact with their peers especially new classmates due to the situation in the midst of pandemic. In terms of school support, they ask for patience, changes, and comments from students like them in order to manage their burden. Support from the community, such as financial and basic support from their barangay offices, and reduce noise pollution from the environment they live during online classes and answering modules.

THEME 4: The impact of technology to SHS students' academic performance

The effects of the technology on the participants are both positive and negative. The positive effect of technology, according to them, helps with the lessons that they didn't quite understand. They can search it easily where there is a lot of information that can be found, and there are also educational apps that help them understand the lesson more effectively. Especially nowadays that they are learning at home. The negative effects of technology are a lack of time management due to social media, games and more. This directly affects their time on doing their modules due to laziness, lack of sleep, etc. They also said that during this pandemic they used technology like laptops and cellphones more, especially in their studies. In most cases, the internet connectivity is the problem to the students especially those that are living in remote places.

IV. CONCLUSION

Therefore, the COVID-19 pandemic caused a plethora of problems for senior high school students at Surigao State College of Technology - Del Carmen Campus. Students in senior high school encountered difficulty with their learning, as well as financial, technical, mental and emotional well-being, and lifestyle issues that impacted them in many ways. The COVID-19 epidemic has an impact on senior high school students' well-being and academic aspects as they continue their academic journey through times of disruption. During the COVID-19 pandemic, cooperation from parents, friends, schools, and the community is critical at SHS. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the use of technology had a positive and negative impact on SHS student studies.

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